

LICENSED FISHERY

Fishing for Abalone

2008/09



PERMITTED FISHING TIME
WEST COAST ZONE ONLY
7.00am – 8.00am

Sustainability Rules

Bag Limit

Roe's Abalone



- 20 per fisher per day
- Legal size limit – 60 mm

Greenlip/Brownlip Abalone



- 5 per fisher per day
- Legal size limit – 140 mm

Possession Limit

A possession limit of 20 Roe's and 10 greenlip/brownlip abalone (combined) applies everywhere except in your permanent place of residence.

The maximum number of abalone that a person may have at their permanent place of residence is:

- 80 Roe's abalone
- 20 greenlip/brownlip abalone

Boat Limit

- A maximum of 5 greenlip/brownlip abalone per fisher per day (or 10 where there are 2 or more fishers) may be carried, or held, aboard a vessel.



Department of Fisheries
Government of Western Australia

Abalone

Managing Western Australia's recreational abalone catch is an essential part of the State Government's Integrated Fisheries Management initiative, launched in 2004.

Each year over 20,000 recreational fishers take out a licence to fish for abalone. The annual recreational catch of Roe's abalone varies between 20 and 40 tonnes while about 10 tonnes of greenlip and brownlip abalone combined are taken. The recreational catch is managed through size and bag limits, as well as closed seasons and closed areas.

Western Australia's waters also support a lucrative commercial abalone fishery. The commercial fishery is strictly managed through a set of quotas that are set each year to ensure the fishery's long-term sustainability.

Roe's abalone inhabit reef platforms across the southern half of the State, north to about Steep Point. They take around four years to reach legal size, which gives females at least two spawning seasons before they become available to be taken by recreational and commercial fishers.

Greenlip and Brownlip abalone primarily occur off the State's southern coastline, preferring limestone or granite bottom in waters deeper than five meters. Greenlip abalone reach legal size between about three to six years of age and brownlip abalone are thought to reach legal size at around four to six years of age, which is at least a year after reaching maturity.

Female abalone can produce millions of eggs each year. After a larval life of about a week, depending on water temperature, the tiny larvae develop into small juveniles (also called 'spat') and settle onto rocks, feeding on microscopic algae. When the juveniles reach about five millimetres in length they will start feeding on larger species of algae, showing a preference for drifting red algae.

Abalone are highly prized for their eating qualities and ongoing research and management is required to ensure that they are harvested at a sustainable level and breeding stocks are protected. Western Australia has one of the few remaining sustainable abalone fisheries in the world.

Seasons and Locations

West Coast Zone

Open Season – Sundays only:

2 Nov – 7 Dec, 2008. 7.00am – 8.00am.

The West Coast Zone extends from Busselton Jetty to the Greenough River Mouth.

This includes all islands within the zone including Rottnest, Carnac, Garden and Penguin islands. Abalone fishing in this zone is permitted on six consecutive Sundays ONLY, commencing on the first Sunday in November.

Fishing in the West Coast zone only, is between 7.00am and 8.00am.

Beach access

When accessing beaches to catch abalone, fishers should use designated paths and avoid damaging coastal vegetation.

Careless treatment of these sensitive areas can lead to erosion and dune destabilisation.

Northern and Southern Zones

Open Season:

1 Oct, 2008 – 15 May, 2009. All day.

The Northern Zone extends from the Greenough River Mouth to the Northern Territory Border.

The Southern Zone extends from the Busselton Jetty to the South Australian Border.

Abalone fishing is permitted in the Northern and Southern Zones all day and the season is open between 1 October, 2008 and 15 May, 2009.



Recreational Abalone Zones in Western Australia

NORTHERN ZONE

Greenough River Mouth to
Northern Territory Border

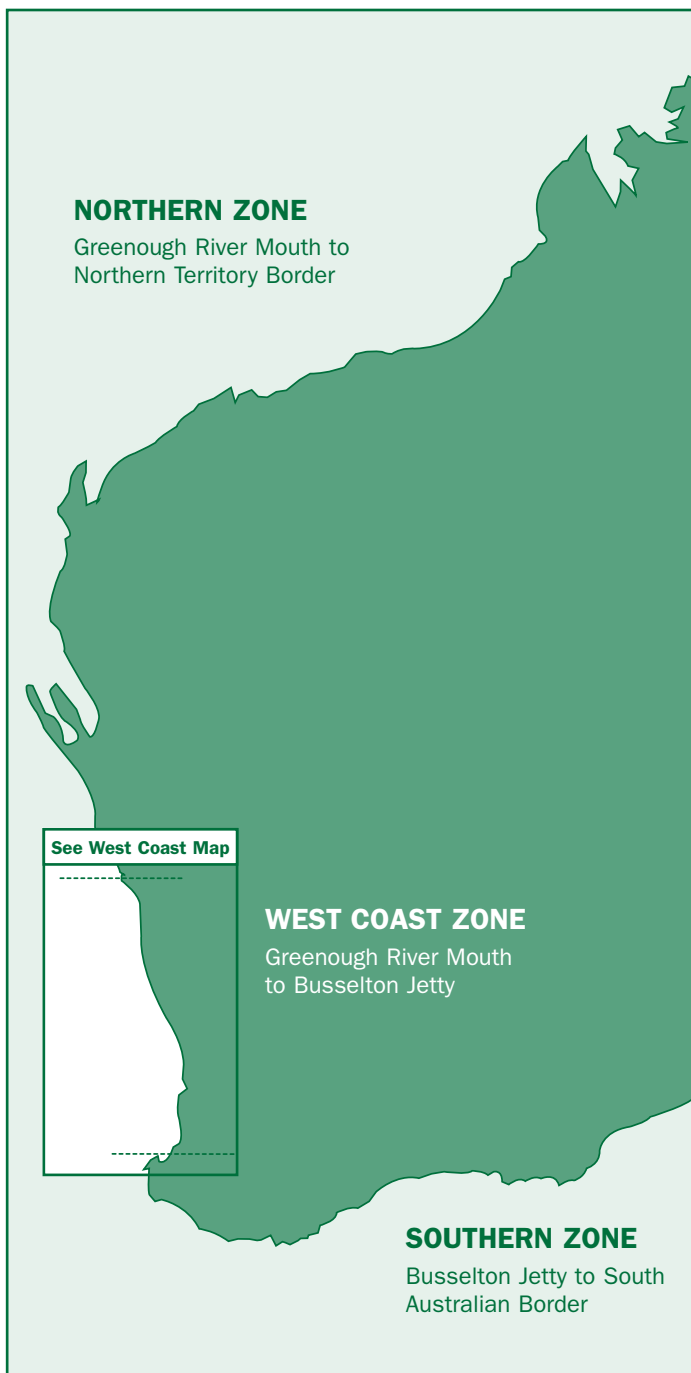
See West Coast Map

WEST COAST ZONE

Greenough River Mouth
to Busselton Jetty

SOUTHERN ZONE

Busselton Jetty to South
Australian Border



West Coast Zone

Busselton Jetty to Greenough River Mouth



Special Conservation Areas

Marmion Marine Park, Shoalwater Islands Marine Park, Rottneest Island (included in the West Coast Zone)

- All shellfish and reef animals such as sea urchins are protected in these important conservation reserves and within 800 metres of Rottneest Island. However, during the open season you may take abalone in these areas, outside of Sanctuary Zones.
- New fishing hours of 7.00am – 8.00am apply.
- Bag and size limits apply in all these areas.

Waterman's Reef Observation Area – NO FISHING

- This area surrounds the old WA Marine Research Laboratories at Waterman and **all reef life is protected in this area at all times.** You may not take any species including abalone, shellfish, crabs, rock lobster and octopus.



Roe's Abalone

Cottesloe Fishing Closure

Due to stock depletions in the Cottesloe area, a closure to recreational abalone fishing was introduced in 2003. This closure runs south of the main Cottesloe groyne to Rous Head and will be in place until abalone stocks have recovered.



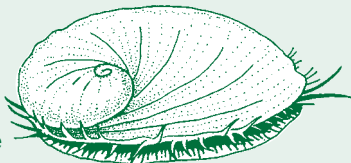
Brownlip Abalone

Yallingup Reef Protected Area

Recreational fishing for abalone is not permitted inside the Yallingup Reef Protected Area.

Jurien Marine Park

Fishing for abalone is not permitted in some restricted zones within the Jurien Marine Park. Please refer to your local Fisheries Office for more information on these zones.



Greenlip Abalone

Diving

Abalone may not be taken by recreational fishers using SCUBA or hookah (surface-supplied compressed air) gear in the West Coast abalone zone.

Safety Tips When Fishing for Abalone

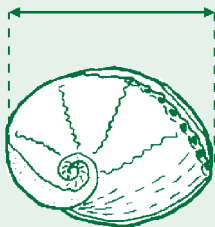
All abalone fishers should consider the following safety tips.

- Use a loose weave net diving bag or similar to carry your catch as this will allow water to pass through and not become a dragging weight.
- Attach your gauge to your wrist, don't hang it around your neck.
- Study the waves before you get into the water and keep an eye on the swell while you are fishing – it is easy to be injured on reefs.
- Wear protective footwear and a wetsuit or light clothing, which will not become too heavy when wet.
- Please observe safety precautions and if you are unsure if conditions are too rough, don't go in.
- If you do get into trouble, try to stay calm and raise your arm (an international distress signal) to attract help.

Measuring

Always carry a gauge to measure the shell before you take the animal off the reef. Your abalone must be 60 mm or more if it is Roe's abalone or over 140 mm if it is a greenlip or brownlip abalone. This is measured across the widest part of the shell. Undersized abalone left undisturbed on the reef can grow larger for next year's season – but if you take them off, they are unlikely to re-attach and will quickly die.

Measure abalone across the widest part of the shell



To remove abalone, insert a flat blade under the edge of the abalone and lift with a quick, strong flick. Carefully count your catch, and take only what you need. There is a bag limit of 20 Roe's and 5 greenlip or brownlip abalone. This limit is strictly enforced to protect breeding stocks, so stop fishing once you reach your limit. Taking more abalone and discarding them later puts pressure on the stock as discarded animals have little chance of survival.

Shucking

Take your catch home to clean it. Removing abalone from their shells (shucking) is not permitted within 200 metres of the high-water mark so that abalone remains don't spoil the beach for others or attract stingrays and other marine foragers to the area.

Abalone cannot be shucked at sea and must be left in their shells so their size can be checked by Department of Fisheries staff.

Catch Care

Keep your catch in good condition by:

- Placing your catch in a string bag, which allows water to flow through it.
- Storing it in a cool, shady place if you are staying longer at the beach.

Penalties for Illegal Fishing

Fishing rules are essential to protect stocks and ensure fishing remains at a sustainable level.

Fishing out of season, taking undersize abalone or having more than your possession limit may all attract penalties as high as \$5,000 plus up to 10 times the dollar value of the species.

It is illegal for recreational fishers to sell their catch and fines as high as \$25,000 plus up to 10 times the prescribed value of the catch may apply.

Licences

You must have a licence to fish for abalone and be prepared to produce it if required. Application forms are available from Department of Fisheries offices and Australia Post outlets. Licences can be obtained or renewed online at the Department of Fisheries' web site at www.fish.wa.gov.au.

The information in this guide is current at the time of the date of printing, but may change. For the most up-to-date information on fisheries and fishing rules in plain English, check the Department of Fisheries' web site at www.fish.wa.gov.au or contact the Department before going fishing.

The latest version of each brochure is available for download in PDF format from the web site. For legislation, a link from the web site will take you to the State Law Publisher.

If you are in doubt about the meaning of any rules, please contact your nearest Fisheries Office for clarification before going fishing.

Further Information

Visit the Department of Fisheries' web site at www.fish.wa.gov.au or contact:

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